2363

The Duty of God's People under Apprehensions of Publick Judgments.

A

SERMON

Preached

To the Rev^d. Mr. *Denham*'s Church, in Ayloffe-Street, Goodman's-Fields, *April 25th.* —And afterwards to the Rev^d. Mr. *Prior*'s Church, in Queen-Street, Ratcliffe, *May* 9, 1750.

On ACCOUNT of the late

EARTHQUAKES.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of many.

By JOHN MILNER, *D. D.*

Diſcite juſtitiam moniti, et non temnere Numen,
Virg. Æn. VI. 620.

LONDON:

Printed for J. NOON, at the *White-Hart* in *Cheapſide*; J. WAUGH, at the *Turk's Head* in *Lombard-Street*; and E. GARDINER, in *Lombard-Street*. 1750.

13/6

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERROR.

THERE is a line tranſpoſed from the bottom of *page* 30 to the top of *page* 32, which correct thus, *page* 30 add at the bottom—*the inſtrumentality of natural cauſes? This is*——dele the ſame line at the top of *page* 32.

ISAIAH XXVI. 20, 21.

Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt.

For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.----

THIS is a day for ſerious recollections. Our fears have diſquieted us; we come to alleviate or remove them. God has manifeſted ſome tokens of diſpleaſure; we come to humble ourſelves before him, and ſupplicate his mercy. The things we have in view are certainly good and attainable: but then you ought to know the means neceſſary for attaining them. They are ſuch, as are difficult to fleſh and blood; diſtaſtful to thoſe corrupt and vicious

 cuſtoms,

cuſtoms, which prevail among us; they are repentance and reformation.

If neither reaſon, nor the word of God can convince us of the importance of thoſe things; yet methinks our fears ſhould.

The *firſt* declare the reaſonableneſs and propriety of repentance and reformation; offer peace, liberty, and glory as the reſult; at the ſame time denouncing God's terrible anger, if we neglect them. But what ſignify offers and denunciations to thoſe, who have heard them ſo long, and thought of them ſo little, that they paſs away, like life itſelf, *as a tale that is told?* The other, *our fears*, bring things into a nearer proſpect. Our danger, in this caſe, is immediately before us. We ſee, as it were God's Hand lifted up, ready to give the deciſive blow. The clouds look black, and gather in for a ſtorm; the thunder is juſt upon breaking forth, that will level us with the duſt, or make the duſt tremble under us. This is the repreſentation of things, which our fears ſuggeſt, and, in ſuch circumſtances, one would think that repentance and reformation needed not a preacher.

But 'tis poſſible men may be ſo hardened, as to reject the offers of Life with indifferency, and treat the Fears of danger with contempt. What can be done to ſave a people, when they will go on to ſin at any rate, with mercies or judgments before them.

Under a ſenſe of divine anger we have had our days of prayer, and it is a proper expreſſion of our piety.——But to what purpoſe?—

Are

Are we better for thoſe religious exerciſes? Have we reformed what is amiſs? Have we more humility and abaſement of ſoul, for our own and others ſins; more purity and equity; more mutual love, forbearance, and candour? I would hope that ſome have thus improved thoſe ſeaſons; yet how little of thoſe fruits appear. I would encourage all to improve them, as what God expects from us. 'Tis in vain to come to Him, and ſupplicate mercy; in vain to put on the moſt ſerious forms of religion, whilſt we are determined to hold faſt our ſins. This very thing will come in againſt us as an aggravation of our ſin, that after we have committed it, we can look God, our conſciences, and the world in the face without bluſhing.

We are once more before the great, the eternal God: but we had as good have been at a concert, or on a party of pleaſure, if we are not come with ſerious purpoſes of repenting and reforming. To come and confeſs our ſins, and go away and fall into them again, amounts to much the ſame, as if we expected that our confeſſions ſhould procure for us greater eaſe and liberty in ſinning. Our moral ſtate, as a Nation, is, I think, very bad, and which nothing but extraordinary remedies can reach. Fear is one means which is ſometimes uſed to bring men to ſober and wiſe reflections upon themſelves. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations might know themſelves to be but men* [a]. As degenerate as we are, I hope, God has an in-

[a] Pſal. ix. 20.

tereſt and people amongſt us ſtill; and that we can intreat for mercy, for his name's ſake. For ſuch God deſigned the ſpecial bleſſings of his word and providence, and the text points out the way to peace and comfort under uneaſy expectations. *Behold the Lord cometh out of his Place*, i. e. is departing from the ſtated and uſual methods of his providence; *to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*, i. e. to bring ſome diſtreſs and calamity on a ſinful world.

In ſuch an uneaſy ſituation God would not have his own people imagine, that what he was going to do was inconſiſtent with his eſtabliſhed promiſe; or that they ſhould be then abandoned and forgotten. No—He ſends his prophet to aſſure them of the contrary, and to invite them into a ſtate of peace and ſecurity. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee: hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt.* Here is I think a plain alluſion to that command given the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, *not to go out of the door of their houſes till the morning, when the deſtroying angel was to paſs through the land*[b]; and there was probably *now* a like viſible diſtinction to be made, as *then*. They were however to retreat, for the benefit of contemplation. They were to enter into ſuch conſiderations, as might encourage their ſubmiſſion and truſt in God; and *to ſhut the doors about them*, that excluding other objects, they might purſue this deſign

[b] Exod. xii. 22, 23.

deſign with greater attention and conſtancy. The end was that they might poſſeſs their ſouls in patience and peace, even whilſt deſolation lay about them.

I ſhall not take up your time in conſidering the events, which the prophet is ſuppoſed to intend: whether the deſtruction of the *Aſſyrian* army before *Jeruſalem,* mentioned afterwards [c]; or the final judgment of wicked men in the laſt day, when the righteous ſhould be delivered from that heavy vengeance; or any other calamity, that was to fall ſolely upon the enemies of truth and virtue; without ſtaying, *I ſay,* to enquire into theſe things, we may, for our preſent purpoſe, obſerve from the words,

I... That God is pleaſed ſometimes to ſtep out of the uſual courſe of things, and bring publick calamities on a people: *the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh.*

II... That when he doth this, it is to puniſh them for their ſins; *to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.*

III... That in thoſe circumſtances it is the duty of God's people to retreat to ſuch conſiderations, as might ſuſtain their

[c] Iſa. xxxvii. 36.

their faith and patience, *come my people, enter into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee.*

IV... Make ſome improvement of this ſubject.

I ſhall not be large on the firſt and ſecond of thoſe heads, that I might have more room to enlarge on the other two, agreeable to the providence which has called us together.

I... I obſerve, *that God is pleaſed ſometimes to ſtep out of the uſual courſe of things, and bring publick calamities on a people: the Lord cometh out of his Place.* His deſign is to awaken mens attention; to ſhew them the evil of ſin; and to convince them, that, notwithſtanding the uniformity and conſtant order in the natural world, there is a ſuperior wiſdom, juſtice and power which preſides, and can make all nature ſubſervient to his moral government.

We are ready to ſpeak of the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, without a proper regard to the author of them; and think to account for every event by them, without looking higher. But what are matter and motion, the principles of natural cauſes, when we come to examine them. We can't conceive how motion ſhould be produced without intelligence and will, becauſe matter

matter itſelf is equally indifferent to motion or reſt. And then as to that grand principle of *Gravity* in matter; this, different from all its other eſſential properties, varies. We find that it increaſes or diminiſhes reciprocally as the ſquares of bodies diſtances from one another diminiſh or increaſe. Such a variable affection cannot therefore proceed from the internal texture, figure, and diſpoſition of the parts, but be impreſſed by the immediate agency of the firſt cauſe. And if ſo, then thoſe eſtabliſhed laws of nature are no other than the effect of the conſtant and unremitting energy of the Deity, in this or that determinate manner. Is it not then moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that God, if he pleaſes, can depart from any ſtated methods of acting, and, by haſtning or retarding; by uniting or compounding natural cauſes, produce ſome unuſual event. Yes, he can make thoſe very cauſes, which uſed to miniſter to our comfort, to be the means of our diſtreſs.

Thus, for inſtance, *He can turn a fruitful land into barrenneſs*, by giving too much ſun, or too little rain. He can return the exhalations of the earth in a ſtorm, and work up the air into a whirlwind. The water, that uſeful element of life, he can let forth into a deluge, and overflow the face of the earth. The juſt proportion of thoſe natural influences, ſo requiſite to the fertility of the earth, is a conſtant and irreſiſtible proof of a Providence, and that by ſuch means God has it always in his power to bleſs or puniſh a people.

His

His power likewiſe reacheth to the moral world. He can influence the minds of men without deſtroying their moral agency. 'Tis but for him to preſent to the mind ſuitable objects of hope and fear, or to take off the reſtraints of his grace, and he will leave a people to run into factions and diviſions. On the other hand he can as ſurpriſingly unite them in a common danger. If a people diſpleaſe God, he can fill them with the fruits of their own doings, and by ſuffering them to fall into indolence and eaſe, bring on a decay of trade, weakneſs and contempt. How famous ſoever they have been in time paſt for the glory of arts and arms, yet he can eaſily infatuate their counſels; turn their wiſdom into folly; cauſe their valour to have no other effect than cowardiſe, and their meaſures to be ſo various and inconſtant as to produce no one national advantage. All this God has done, and threatned to do, when a peoples ways don't pleaſe him.

Nations muſt have their recompence in this world, or not at all; becauſe civil communities and relations only ſubſiſt in the preſent ſtate. But then the ſame juſtice that governs particular perſons, governs nations; and God deals with one and the other conſtantly in proportion to their moral character: with nations only in this world, with particular perſons ſometimes in this world, certainly in the next.

Thus publick calamities, which have been both remarkable and uſeful, have been ſent upon a people, and the hand of God has been viſible

in

in them, adapting them to their moral ſtate. This brings me

II... To ſhew, that when God is pleaſed thus to ſtep out of the uſual courſe of things to diſtreſs a people, it is for their Sins. We cannot well doubt of this, if we conſider

The inflexible rectitude and purity of his nature, by which he is eſſentially oppoſite to all ſin. Should we meet with any thing contrary to our tempers, how natural is it to expreſs a diſlike of it. Sin is moſt repugnant to the divine nature, and therefore muſt be an object that always gives him offence. *He has no pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with him* [d]. No wonder then when ſin becomes the general character of a people, that he ſhould manifeſt his diſpleaſure; becauſe the provocation and inſult is greater from a multitude of ſinners. *Again*,

The wiſe and good government of the world requires ſuch divine interpoſitions. So reſtleſs, and waſtfull a thing is ſin, that was it permitted to go its full length, it would throw human affairs into the utmoſt confuſion and diſorder; violate the moſt ſacred ties of ſociety, and heave the world off its axis. 'Tis this corrupts mens principles, enflames their paſſions, and would open a ſcene of univerſal war. *Whence come wars, whence come fightings among you, come they not hence, even of your luſts* [e].

[d] Pſal. v. 4. [e] Jam. iv. 1.

To keep things therefore in order God ſees it neceſſary many times to rebuke ſin; and to give ſhores to mens paſſions as to the waves of the ſea, there to ſtop, and there to break their rage and foam. *Once more.*

The intereſt and kingdom of Chriſt in the world requires many times the reſtraint and puniſhment of ſin. This is a cauſe that has been, through a ſucceſſion of ages, the care of providence. *God hath ſet up his king upon his holy hill of zion*, and he will ſupport his authority. If ſin threatens to overturn this kingdom in any nation, and he does not think fit to remove it to another, he will appear againſt it. *Kings, and Nobles, and Judges of the earth, when they have taken counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed. He that ſitteth in the heavens has had them in deriſion; he has broken them with a rod of iron, and daſhed them in pieces like a potters veſſel* [f].

If God is holy, and the righteous governor of the world, if he has ſworn to keep his holy Covenant, we muſt expect that he ſhould manifeſt himſelf againſt ſin, When it threatens any of thoſe intereſts, which his honour and glory oblige him to maintain, we muſt believe that he will oppoſe it, and many times he does it *by terrible things in righteouſneſs* [g]. The hiſtory of providence in the *Jewiſh* ſtate is an evident proof of this. There were remarkable turns and revolutions in their affairs. Sometimes they were reduced very low, ſtraitned in the common

[f] Pſal. ii. 2, 6, 9. [g] Pſal. lxv. 5.

common bleſſings of life, and given a ſpoil to their enemies. But whenever this happened it was for their ſins. This is conſtantly pointed out to them as the cauſe of all the evils, which befell them; and which, upon their humiliation and repentance, being removed, they were raiſed to their former proſperity, dignity and power. But I haſten to the

III... General, to conſider, under God's judgments, or the juſt fear of them from the prevalency of ſin, what is the duty of good perſons, ſo often called the people of God, in thoſe circumſtances. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee. Hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt.*

Whatever the calamity, here referred to, was, I think good men were to be preſerved from it. But we cannot extend this to every other caſe. Good men as members of a ſinful community may fall with others, by plague, famine, or earthquakes. Though they abhor the ſins of the times, which pull down divine judgments, yet, on account of this political relation, they may ſuffer. But then it reaches not beyond this preſent ſtate, and the ſenſe of fury and indignation will be quite taken away. They ſuffer, but are not puniſhed. No conſcious guilt, no fearful expectation attends them, which makes a wide difference between them and others. However in ſuch circumſtances,

under apprehenſion of publick judgments, there is a behaviour ſuited to their character, and which has a tendency to ſecure their peace and hope, and that is, to retreat a little from buſineſs and pleaſure, and enter into ſuch meditations of God, and ſuch exerciſes of religion, as he might reaſonably expect from them. *For inſtance,*

To converſe with God.
To examine into their moral ſtate.
To yield themſelves afreſh to God.
And to intercede for man.

I ſhall conſider each of thoſe heads diſtinctly, and recommend them as a ſeaſonable diſpoſition of piety.

FIRST ... *to converſe with God*, or to enter into ſuch conſiderations of the divine Being, and his relations to us, as may lead us to ſuitable acts of faith, love, reverence, ſubmiſſion, truſt, *&c.* till we are animated, warmed, and exalted in our affections.

Contemplate *then* his *perfections*, which make up his majeſty, excellency, and glory. That Being, I would now turn my thoughts to, is poſſeſſed of every excellency of being, and in ſuch a meaſure, as to exceed the utmoſt ſtretch of my reaſon and imagination.—His *Eternity*, without beginning, or end, ſurpaſſes the capacity of thought. His *Immenſity*, that makes his preſence and power univerſal, commands my reverence at all times, and in all places. His *Unchange-*

Unchangeableneſs lays a firm ground for my truſt and dependance. His *Almighty power*, which cannot be reſiſted, or come ſhort of its aim, teaches me to fear. His *All-ſufficiency* directs my choice, and enlivens my hopes. His *Rectitude*, *Purity*, and *moral Goodneſs* ſhew me the deformities of ſin, and offer me the moſt amiable pattern of life. That conſummate *Wiſdom*, which appears in the fitneſs and proportion of things; in the adjuſtment of means to ends, and bringing good out of evil, raiſes my admiration, and bids me hope in the midſt of doubts and difficulties. *Thus acquaint thyſelf with him, and be at peace: thereby good ſhall come unto thee* [h].

Contemplate the *Providence* of God, which is his preſent government of the world. Here is room for the exerciſe of every devout mind, *to regard the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hands* [i]. —— How adoreable is the *ſupremacy* of this providence? all nature is his care, and ſubject to his pleaſure. Heavens, earth, and ſeas are, by his continual influence, preſerved in their beauty, order, and uſe. Every creature is his inſtrument; every event is under his eye and direction. He raiſeth up and pulleth down, and none can reſiſt his will. How admirable is the *wiſdom* of this providence, which accompliſhes its ends in ſuch unlikely conjunctures, by ſuch improbable means, and often *by ſuch terrible things as we looked not for* [k]? Hence thoſe ſurprizing turns and revolutions

[h] Job xxii. 21. [i] Iſa. v. 12. [k] Iſa. lxiv. 3.

lutions in human affairs. How conſpicuous many times is the *Righteouſneſs* of this providence, which confounds the wicked device, and brings about events favourable to truth, liberty, and religion. Thoſe great monarchies, which make ſuch a figure in ancient hiſtory, loſt their virtue before they loſt their liberty, and were greatly corrupted before they were finally deſtroyed. *Even ſo, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments* [l]. The *papal kingdom*, the greateſt corruption of all religion, that ever appeared in the world, is to expect the ſame fate. God will not always ſuffer ſuch a flagrant abuſe and impoſition upon mankind. Prophecy has ſettled and ſealed its doom, and we expect its ſudden and ſurpriſing fall; *for in one hour will thy judgment come* [m]. In eying this Providence we ſhould rejoice in our ſecurities, and deſire to comport with its meaſures, and ſubmit to its will. To ſuffer when God thinks it proper; to be contented to want, what he is pleaſed to deny, and to do, what he is pleaſed to command. *His right-hand is full of righteouſneſs* [n].

Contemplate, *finally*, the *Covenant* of Grace. This is the moſt glorious of all God's works, and the leading view in all his deſigns, *namely*, to reconcile and reſtore man to Himſelf. This has been a ſcheme carrying on for ages paſt, and is ſtill purſued. The perfections, the providence of God are all engaged in it. The ſon of God, the mediator, is the life and ſubſtance of this covenant;

[l] Rev. xvi. 7. [m] Rev. xviii. 10. [n] Pſal. xlviii. 10.

covenant; its conſtitution merciful, to ſeek and ſave; its terms reaſonable, to repent, believe, and become virtuous; its end, divine glory. How pleaſing to conſider the privileges which are here ſecured to true Believers, to have God for their father; the forgiveneſs of ſin; the juſtification of their perſons; their life guided; their comforts bleſſed; their afflictions ſanctified; and all their intereſts under a wiſe and kind direction. This covenant has been ever the joy and ſupport of good men, and ſhould not be forgotten, when we are converſing with God, and encouraging ourſelves againſt the power of fear. It muſt give a noble and rational ſatisfaction to be able to think upon good grounds, that we are in this covenant; that we have the God of nature, the God of providence for our God, our Covenant God.

SECONDLY... In our retirement, we ſhould take occaſion *to examine into our moral State.* We ſhould enquire into the diſpoſitions, affections, and tendencies of our ſouls; whether holineſs has the full poſſeſſion of us, and its principles are wrought into our inward frame; whether it produces lively taſtes and reliſhes of goodneſs, and appears in real fruits; whether we eye God, and own him, as a ſovereign and holy God, and look to Chriſt as an inſtructor and pattern; whether we are carried to imitate the virtues of his life, as well as depend upon the merits of his death. A judgment formed upon ſuch enquiries will lead us into a true notion of our ſpiritual ſtate.

We

We are fallen upon evil times, and think we have much reaſon to fear the judgments of God. We may not commit thoſe groſs ſins, and abominations, the ſcandals of our religion, which are every where complained of? but have we contributed nothing to the ſtock of common guilt? let us review our paſt conduct, and conſider, whether we have given no countenance to ſome ſins, by connivance, by flattery, by indolence and eaſe;—by omitting the duties we owe to our families, or remitting the diſcipline we ought to maintain in them;—by indulging too much the ſelfiſh, private, and earthly affections;—by diſguiſing, where we ought to be open;—impoſing where we ought to be juſt;---deceiving where we ought to be faithful. In religion is there no loſs of our firſt love, no abatement of our zeal, no careleſſneſs in our walk? In life have we not made, beyond our rank and ability, nay, beyond what common prudence would ſuggeſt, ſome partial approaches to the prevailing luxury, and the enſnaring aſſemblies of pleaſure?

There are refinements in ſin, as well as open deformities, and I believe we muſt find, that the moſt innocent of thoſe amuſements, which have been introduced amongſt us of late, have given a diverſion to buſineſs, and gradually cooled the affections to the beſt things. The worſt effect, I fear, it will have upon our children. We may be conſcious to ourſelves of upright and fair intentions, and aim no further than to cultivate friendſhip. Our young friends who are judges

of

of our example, but not of our innocence, will be tempted to the ſame amuſements, and perhaps not with our caution and reſerve. How do their young paſſions glow, when they think of being one day, as gay, and as happy, as their parents?

You ſee God has ſpoken to us by terrible things, and this is no time for deceiving ourſelves; no time to refine upon, and excuſe the follies of mankind. Nothing but repentance and reformation can open the way to our peace and ſafety. We ought *therefore* to be impartial in our ſearch, and obſervant in ranſacking our conſciences. Whatever charity we expreſs towards other mens ſins, we muſt not deal tenderly with our own. If, upon this examination, we have any reaſon to reproach ourſelves with ſecret inclinations, or any partial approaches to vicious cuſtoms, we ought this day to humble ourſelves. The pious, as well as prophane in character muſt retrieve their former loſs, and reform their paſt errors. The caſe is brought to a very ſhort iſſue, and we ſhould be unfaithful not to tell you of it, we muſt reform, or be undone.

THIRDLY... Good men in times of fear and danger ſhould yield themſelves a-freſh to God. They have done it, no doubt, frequently before; but it ſeems decent to do it at ſuch a time, and with ſolemnity:—to recognize his right and intereſt in them,—to own his ſovereignty,—to fly to him as their Almighty ſuc-

cour, hope and end. So good men in ages paſt have demeaned themſelves; have avouched the Lord for their God, and committed themſelves to his diſpoſal by freſh acts of faith, love, and dependance.—When you are *then* retired, lay yourſelves in his preſence, and chearfully acknowledge him

Your Owner; I mean in a covenant relation. He has a right in all as his creatures; in you as his peculiar treaſure, and that right confirmed by your own perſonal act. You have choſen God, as your father and governor; and you muſt conſider him in this light, as one that is not only to provide for you; but diſpoſe of you. Have you not authorized his will to be the rule of your duty and expectations? Have you not believed and been perſuaded, that he would command you nothing but what is reaſonable, and call you to no affliction but what is neceſſary? *If need be ye are in heavineſs* [o]. In all your diſtreſſes and fears bow yourſelves to his will, ſaying after the beſt example, *not my will, but thine be done* [p]. Submit to his wiſdom; truſt to his care; and plead for mercy in the language of an humble piety, *I am thine, ſave me, for I have ſought thy precepts* [q].

Yield yourſelves to him as *your Beneſactor*; not ſo much for beſtowing common, as ſpiritual bleſſings. One acceptable way of obtaining new favours, is to ſhew our gratitude for the paſt. *If he that made the light to ſhine out of darkneſs hath ſhined into your hearts, and given*

[o] 1 Pet. i. 6. [p] Luke xxii. 42. [q] Pſal. cxix. 94.

given you the affecting knowledge of his glory in saving sinners by Jesus Christ [r]:— If he, whose wisdom, power and goodness appear so visibly in the creation, *hath manifested himself to you, so as not to the world* [s]: praise him for his goodness, for his gracious work in you; acknowledge him the fountain of moral truth and affections. Then plead for mercy, saying; *Wilt thou not, O Lord, ordain peace for us, for thou hast wrought all our works in us* [t]?

Yield yourselves, as *the objects of his son's care and love*. God is best pleased with him and with us; in him. *No man cometh to the father, but by me* [u]. Christ must be the medium of all that worship, service and glory we offer to the supreme throne. His character and kingdom is a divine constitution, the work and care of ages; attested by a series of miraculous providences; witnessed to in our age by the dispersion of the *Jews*, and its preservation in the midst of enmity and opposition: *this constitution* you have submitted to, and gloried in the relation. If it has produced in you any real, interesting effects, plead with God to dispose of you, and save you, *for his son's sake*.

Yield yourselves, *finally*, to God as *your ultimate end and happiness*. The design of all religion is to make up the breach between God and man; to remove the estrangement, to subdue the enmity of the heart; and bring us to fix in God, as the center of our desires, hopes

[r] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [s] John xiv. 22, 23. [t] Isa. xxvi. 12. [u] John xiv. 6.

and reſt. Happy you, that have made this choice, becauſe it will remain, when every other enjoyment and dependance will be pulled away from you. Happy you that have a God to go to, when houſes, trades, friendſhips, and earthly pleaſures ſhall be no more. Indulge on this occaſion the holy breathings and aſpirations of ſoul; the fervent deſires of love; ſay, *whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth, that I deſire beſides thee* [w]. "Thou art, "O God, my ſupreme happineſs. I value no- "thing, I deſire nothing but thee. Here I re- "ſign to thy will, and ſubmit to the ſevereſt "trials, which thou ſeeſt neceſſary to bring me "to thyſelf. Let what will befall me, ſay "thou art mine, prepare me for thyſelf, and "I will adore thy righteous judgments."

FOURTHLY... In your retirements indulge the kind benevolent thought. Intercede with God for the prevention or mitigation of deſerved judgments. Love is one half of our Religion, and a ſpirit of prayer an evidence of the whole, as it was of St. *Paul*'s converſion, *behold he prayeth* [x], We muſt not on this occaſion be found wanting in either.

I fear there is too great a decline of this temper amongſt good men. They ſeem to be driving on ſeperate intereſt, and to be aware of one another, whilſt they believe in the ſame God and Saviour; whilſt they have the ſame bible in their hands; and are waiting for the ſame heaven.

[w] Pſal. lxxiii. 25. [x] Acts ix. 11.

heaven. I would hope this is more owing to weakneſs, than deſign. Where I ſee the image and love of God, though the perſon may differ from me in ſome ſentiments, and thoſe which I take to be of importance, and would oppoſe on proper occaſions, yet I ought to make great allowance for human imperfections, and, I thank God, I can honour, love and ſerve ſuch a man. This not loving as bretheren ſhould be conſidered on theſe occaſions: eſpecially when we remember how much an angry, party, factious temper will obſtruct the efficacy of our prayers. The Apoſtle's words, in another caſe, may be fitly applied here. *Let us regard one another, as heirs of the grace of life, that our prayers be not hindered* [y].

Let us pray for *our Country*. That is an object, which comprizes every other object, we ought to value or wiſh proſperity to: nay with this, every other intereſt muſt fall. *For my brethren and companions ſake, I will now ſay, peace be within thee. Becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God, I will ſeek thy good* [z]. Pray that good order and goverment might be preſerved; that juſtice might be faithfully adminiſtred; that immoralities might be effectually puniſhed; that trade and manufactures may flouriſh; that liberty and virtue may be the ſtability, and glory of our times. Pray for our Governors, that as their cares are great, their wiſdom, ſtrength, and publick ſpirit may be in proportion: *that thoſe*

[y] 1 Pet. iii. 7. [z] Pſal. cxxii. 8, 9.

thoſe that rule over men, may be juſt, ruling in the fear of God *.

Let us pray for the *Church of God.* That its protection might be eminent; its borders enlarged; its glory appear in the fruits of real religion.---Pray that peace, love, and purity may be the diſtinguiſhing marks of chriſtianity amongſt us.

Pray for thoſe, *who poſſibly never prayed for themſelves.* ---- That unprepared ſinners might not be cut off in the very act of ſin, and whilſt they are thoughtleſs, in the very ſcenes of proſtitution and wickedneſs.----In their *ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs; in their chambering and wantonneſs; in their riot and blaſphemy* [a]. "Spare "them, O Lord, for happier occaſions; for "conviction and reformation."

Thus it becomes us to ſhew our charity to others, when we come to aſk charity for ourſelves. Such interceſſions are pleaſing to God, as we have reaſon to judge from ancient examples. *Sodom* had ſtood and flouriſhed, if there had been the leaſt remains of goodneſs there, on the interceſſion of *Abraham. Moſes, Phineas, Job,* &c. were prevalent in their interceſſions for others; and the caſe is repreſented moſt deplorable, *when there were none found to make up the hedge, and ſtand in the gap before the Lord, to intercede for the land, that he might not deſtroy it* [b].

Thoſe

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.
[a] Rom. xiii. 13. Luke xxi. 34.
[b] Ezek. xxii. 30.

Thoſe are the things, which good men ſhould turn their thoughts to, under apprehenſions of God's judgments; as ſuitable exerciſes of their piety and hope. For —— by converſing thus with the perfections, providence and covenant of God, we ſhall ſhew our delight in him. And delight is the true ſtate of a religious mind, the principle of free chearful obedience; and the ſource of joy unſpeakable. *He looketh on the Earth and it trembleth; he toucheth the Hills and they ſmoke. My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet* [c].—By examining into our moral State, we ſhall come to that excellent and neceſſary part of wiſdom, *the knowledge of ourſelves.* Then it is to be hoped, that our ſins and imperfections will riſe up to view; the one to make us humble, the other penitent: both of great eſtimation in the ſight of God, and both productive of inward peace.---By yielding ourſelves to God we do the moſt reaſonable thing in the world, acknowledging the creator's right: the moſt evangelical thing in the world, acquieſcing in him as our end and happineſs; and both ſerve to heal and calm the ruffled mind.---By interceeding for others, we do the moſt charitable thing in the world; and charity is the work of heaven.

We fear the judgments of God, but thus employed we ſhall avoid much of the terror of that fear, and all the fatal conſequences of thoſe judgments. The happy tendency of ſuch exerciſes will be---to lead the ſoul to patience and ſubmiſſion.

[c] Pſal. civ. 32, 34.

ſubmiſſion. When the account is ſtated, and peace reſtored, we ſhall more calmly ſubmit to his will. *It is the Lord*, our owner and covenant God, *let him do as ſeemeth him good* [d].—— To give firmneſs and conſtancy. "Why ſhould "I be thus caſt down, when I am perſuaded I "ſhall not be caſt off. I am a mortal crea-"ture, and this frame will be ſhaken to pieces, "by ſome diſtemper, by ſome accident or "other, and what ſignifies it, whether by fe-"ver, apoplexy, or earthquake. Sudden "death, ſudden glory to a good man."---- *Finally*; to introduce an habitual comfort into the ſoul, and by a reſt in God to anticipate ſomething of the everlaſting reſt.

I have thus ſhewn you, *O ye people of God*, your duty in this ſeaſon. I hope there is no need to preſs you with many words to comply with it. *Should not wiſdom be juſtified of all her children* [e]? You ſee how low religion runs amongſt us, and will not you vindicate its honour? Is there little remains of a pious education, little experience of its power under a ſpecious profeſſion. The great God is daily inſulted; his authority neglected, his name and day abuſed, and every inſtance of his goodneſs prophaned. And will you ſeem to go off to the tents of the enemy? Is there any vanity, any humour, any mean, faſhionable taſte, that you prefer to your religion, *who then ſhall riſe up for God* [f]? Now is the time for the burning and ſhining lights to appear. Now to mortify that pride;

[d] 1 Sam. iii. 18. [e] Luke vii. 35. [f] Pſal. xciv. 16.

pride; to deny that ſelf, to crucify that world, which rival God in your hearts. But give me leave to make an

APPLICATION

Of this ſubject agreeable to the occaſion of our preſent aſſembling.

The belief of God's being and providence is very natural and eaſy to the attentive mind. Yet when things for ſome time go on in one uniform courſe, the belief is apt to grow languid. God is pleaſed therefore to draw our attention to him by the ſurprize and terror of unuſual appearances, by *thunders*, *plagues*, *comets*, *earthquakes*, &c. The very *Heathens*, on thoſe occaſions, were led to their expiations and prayers, and did not think it ſufficient to be called upon by the miniſters of religion; but that every one ſhould ſet about the reformation of himſelf [g]. And will not more be expected from us under our greater light and advantages.

[g] Cleanthes quidem noſter quatuor de cauſis dixit in animis hominum informatas deorum eſſe notiones.——Tertiam, quae terreret animos fulminibus, tempeſtatibus, nimbis, nivibus, grandinibus, vaſtitate, peſtilentia, terraemotibus, &c. Quibus exterriti homines vim quandam eſſe coeleſtem et divinam ſuſpicati ſunt.

Cic. de N. D. II. 5.

Etenim haec deorum immortalium vox, haec pene oratio judicanda eſt, cum ipſe mundus, cum aer, atque terrae, motu quodam novo contremiſcunt, et inuſitato aliquid ſono, incredibilique praedicant; in quo conſtituendae nobis ſunt procurationes, et obſecratio, quemadmodum monemur. Sed faciles ſunt preces apud eos, qui ultro nobis viam

God has ſeemed of late to come out of his place againſt us, to ſtep out of the uſual courſe of his providence to humble us. We have been engaged in a long war, which has conſumed much of our blood and treaſure, *&c.*---We have had the ſword of rebels drawn in the very heart of our country, to our great terror, and the appaent hazard of all that is dear to us.—We have had ſome locuſts flying amongſt us, the harbingers of deſtruction, and which have made ſuch waſte in the fruits and herbage of other countries.—We have had the murrain in our paſtures, which has threatned, notwithſtanding all our precautions, to cut off the herd from the ſtall. Thus have we been alarmed with danger in every quarter, but who has mourned? our ſin and nakedneſs have appeared, but who has bluſhed?

God has waited for the improvement of thoſe tokens of his diſpleaſure, but how little of this nature has been ſeen. We ſtill go on in our own way with impunity from man, can we hope that we ſhall go on with impunity from God? can we ſuppoſe that thoſe ſcenes of lewdneſs; thoſe perjuries, thoſe oaths and abominations, practiſed in contempt of laws, and all our civil intereſts, ſhould ſubſiſt without ſome mark of divine diſpleaſure? No—God has frowned upon us again, by viſiting us with

viam ſalutis oſtendunt: noſtrae nobis ſunt inter nos irae, diſcordiaeque placandae.

Cic. Or. de Haruſ. Reſpon. 28.

with earthquakes [h]. He is now expecting the good effects of this new viſitation.—We are met together on this account, to humble ourſelves for our ſins, and ſupplicate divine mercy. Conſider then

i... *The dreadful warning, which God has given us.* It carries terror in its front, and ruin in its train, Its approach creates ſurprize, and a wild fear; for as it cannot be foreſeen, nor yet avoided, it muſt give an alarum to all our paſſions at once. From many accounts you know how diſmal the effects of earthquakes have been. And had the laſt ſhock been a little more violent, our houſes, our churches, our magnificent ſtructures would have been turned into rubbiſh, and that the covering of our grave. But God was pleaſed in the midſt of judgment to remember mercy. His hand was lifted up to give terror, but not ruin. How thankful ſhould we be when we remember this? how ready in our obedience to that God, who makes us as remarkable for the mercy, as others *for the judgment, which he executeth* [i]. Conſider

ii... *That our ſins have deſerved this judgment in its full extent.* I have no inclination to

[h] One on the 8th of *February* laſt; a ſecond, and more violent, on the 8th of *March* following.

[i] Pſal. ix. 16.

enumerate the particular ſins we ſtand chargeable with, and I think there is no need. *The ſhew of our countenance witneſſeth againſt us; we declare our ſin as Sodom, and hide it not* [k].

Let me only obſerve, that when we come to confeſs our ſins, we muſt not gently touch ſome, and keep others quite out of ſight. This would be a bad ſymptom, and juſtly accounted a further aggravation of ſin. We deſire a cure, but then to be willing *to have our hurt healed ſlightly* [l], ſhews that we are not quite out of love with our ſins. We would have our comforts ſpared, and ſo it ſeems, in this diſpoſition, we would have our pleaſing, gainful ſins ſpared too. Such a repentance cannot be acceptable to God, which is reſerved in its confeſſion, and muſt be partial and imperfect in its reformation; and which will leave within us ſtill the cauſe of God's diſpleaſure.

Luxury, pride, and the immoderate love of pleaſure, are the leading capital ſins of our day. Thoſe ſpread like a leproſy through all ranks and degrees of men. The taint is deep; the cure is difficult, I had almoſt ſaid, impoſſible, without ſome judgments, more tremendous than we have yet felt. The ſcheme we are upon ſeems to me quite impracticable, to gratify at the ſame time our curioſity, and covetouſneſs, and can be ſupported by nothing, but injuſtice and violence, which in the end muſt weaken and deſtroy us.

Amongſt

[k] Iſa. iii. 9. [l] Jer. vi. 14.

Amongſt the rich there are *maſquerades, plays, aſſemblies of pleaſure*, &c. which, to ſay the ſofteſt thing of them, naturally alienate the mind from buſineſs, both publick and private, and lead to an indifferency to all religion. This renders men venal, and prepares them to ſell their country on all occaſions, *&c. For what?* That they might have wherewithal to ſupport the extravagant luſt of pleaſure.---The middle claſs is, we ſee, ambitious to appear in the ſame taſte: by which means trade comes to be either neglected, or puſhed on beyond the ſtrength of their circumſtances; and, as a conſequence of both, difficulties ariſe which they cannot honourably quit themſelves of. *For what?* That they might follow the taſte of thoſe above them, and ſupport the pride of life.——The poorer ſort of people have their luxuries too, which they fooliſhly purſue, to the impairing both their health and income, in the free uſe of *ſpirituous liquors*. This vicious cuſtom prepares them to bid defiance to God and man, in horrid oaths; and too often proves the occaſion of idleneſs, robberies, and murder. *For what?* That they might gratify this inclination to pleaſure, and rather than miſs it, they will ſtoop to the mire and the trough.

This unhappy turn to luxury and pleaſure grows upon us daily to the apparent hazard both of liberty and religion. It runs to the eaſieſt methods of ſupply; nay to any methods, though every one ſees they muſt end in a ſtate of mean dependance and ſervitude. What have

we

we not deſerved, who are thus laviſh of ineſtimable bleſſings? God has often reſcued us from eminent danger; and we are as often expoſing ourſelves to danger again. How juſtly might he ſay, that he would deliver us no more. Have the ſeats of thoſe crimes been terribly ſhaken, and have they not deſerved to be ſwallowed up: to be made a warning to the reſt of the nation; a reproach in the whole earth? It was certainly a mercy, that the judgment was ſo light, when the guilt was ſo heavy.---Conſider

iii... What is the moral inſtruction from this extraordinary event. It is this, *Sin no more, leſt a worſt thing befall thee* [1]. Many and different have the reflections been, which men have made upon this event, but I am ſurprized that any ſhould reſt in the caſual effects of natural cauſes. Is there not a wiſe, a juſt and holy Being that made the world and governs it; and *indeed* who ſo fit to govern the world, as he that made it? On this reaſonable ſuppoſition will it not be agreeable to his moral character to appear againſt ſin? Will it not be an inſtance of his infinite benignity and goodneſs to ſend afflictions for preventing, or curing it? Do civil communities only ſubſiſt in this preſent world, and is it not reaſonable to expect, that he ſhould now take occaſion to puniſh them for their ſins? When he ſees this neceſſary, what can become his majeſty and wiſdom more, than to do it by the

[1] John v. 14.

the way to humble us in our immediate dependencies, and to leave us no ſuccour or help, but in himſelf.

No natural cauſe but he created, but he determined its place, its influence, and period. And how perfect that mind; how adoreable that wiſdom, that fitted the time of its agency and influence, to correſpond with the meaſures of his moral government? *Fire and hail, ſnow and vapour, and ſtormy winds fulfil his word* [m]. Earthquakes in their cauſes, and preparations are out of our ſight, and we can form no more, than reaſonable conjectures about them. Of the times when they ſhall happen we are perfectly ignorant, and therefore all predictions about them are inſolent and vain. But then when they happen, ſo as to coincide with a ſtate of things, worthy of the divine interpoſure, we have no reaſon to doubt of their being under a divine direction, and of coming with a divine meſſage.

An earthquake, *for inſtance*, attended the general deluge, and is ſuppoſed to have broken up the fountain of the great deep. *And was not the wickedneſs of man great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually* [n]. A deluge of ſin preceded the deluge of water; and they that ſhook off God's fear, and would take no *warning* [o], were deſtroyed by his power.—An earthquake, attended with a ſtorm of thunder and the

[m] Pſal. cxlviii. 8. [n] Gen. vi. 5. [o] 1 Pet. iii. 20.

the inſtrumentality of natural cauſes? This is lightning, ſunk *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* into a lake; but were they not firſt ſunk into the moſt abject and deteſtable wickedneſs; *the cry of it was great, and their ſin grievous* [p]? So grievous; *that righteous Lot, who dwelt amongſt them, was vexed*, was moved with a juſt indignation, *at their filthy converſation, and unlawful deeds* [q].— An earthquake ſwallowed up *Korah* and his company. *The earth opened, and they went down alive into the pit, in the preſence of all Iſrael, and their cry, as they ſunk, was terrible* [r]. And was not this the juſt recompence of their mutiny and rebellion againſt one, whom God had owned and commiſſioned to guide and ſettle his people.---An earthquake attended the crucifixion of our bleſſed ſaviour, and was it not an awful token of divine reſentment at that impious fact [s]?---An earthquake ſhook the foundations of the priſon were *Paul* and *Silas* lay for the teſtimony of a good conſcience. So violent was it, that it looſened the connections of the houſe, *and the doors flew open* [t]. Was not this a noble contempt of that power, which confined them; and a brand of infamy fixed upon all future meaſures of *perſecution? By the way, how happy would it be, under ſuch an awful viſitation, to be employed, as* Paul *and* Silas *were at that time?* They prayed, and ſang praiſes unto God: *happy to improve the viſitation, as the Jailor did*, Sirs what muſt I do to

[p] Gen. xviii. 20. [q] 2 Pet. ii, 7, 8. [r] Numb. xvi. 32, &c. [s] Matt. xxvii. 51. [t] Acts xvi. 26.

to be ſaved [u] ? *It frightned him, not out of his ſenſes, but out of his ſins.*

Now when there were ſuch occaſions in the moral world, ſo fit for a divine interpoſition: when at the ſame time there were ſuch extraordinary events in the natural world, they can appear no leſs, than marks of divine diſpleaſure. There is *certainly* ſome uſe to be made of thoſe events. There is a voice in them, that ought to be heard. It loudly calls upon us *to fear God and repent of our ſins.* A concern therefore to improve them is not to be righteous over much, as ſome may imagine. It is a becoming regard *to the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands.*—Wherefore give me leave, with all earneſtneſs and perſuaſion, in the

IV ... *And laſt place,* to EXHORT you, that hear me this day, *to repentance.* I ſpeak in the name of that God, whoſe power you fear; in the name of that God, whoſe mercy you want, and in which alone you can be eaſy and happy, *Repent and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out* [w]. I wiſh I could ſpeak this with ſuch energy and effect, as to reach the heart of every ſinner, and ſhake all their prejudices aſunder.

I exhort you to nothing *unreaſonable* in all this. For, if you have been in a wrong way, you ought to ſtop and return, this is the voice of wiſdom. If you have offended, *it is meet to be*

[u] Acts xvi. 25, 30. [w] Acts iii. 19.

ſaid unto him, I have born chaſtiſment, I will not offend any more [x]. Such a diſpoſition we expect in our offending children and ſervants, or do not think them capable objects of favour. But I need not ſtay to prove a thing ſo evident, and which, few are ſo hardened, but they intend to do one time or other. Herein, I fear, they promiſe themſelves more than they are able to perform, not conſidering the difficulty of conquering ſenſe, inclination and habit.

That time, which ſinners promiſe themſelves for repentance, may not come; or be too ſhort, when it comes, for any ſuch purpoſe. Repentance is an univerſal change; it requires our utmoſt pains, and prayers. The whole complexion of a ſinful ſoul muſt be altered. And is this a work to be crouded into a corner, or diſpatched in a moment? The ſhock of an earthquake comes on a ſudden, and without any previous warning. Had the *laſt* been more violent; had the earth opened, what could ſinners have done in that moment of conſternation? What more than have uttered with ſhrieks, and a wildneſs of deſpair, LORD HAVE MERCY UPON MY SOUL; but with how little hope? Who is that *Lord*, they invoke? That Being whoſe power and authority, they have a thouſand times defied. What that *Mercy*, they implore? That very mercy, that has entreated them ſo long; and which they have as obſtinately reſiſted and abuſed. What that *ſoul*, which is now ſo much the object of their concern? That

[x] Job xxxiv. 31.

That very ſoul which they have been wounding, which they have been expoſing to every temptation; and which they have proſtituted to the meaneſt things. Can ſuch expect that God ſhould accept them, when they can ſin no longer: or be moved by that lamentation, which is the effect of fear, not conviction? O that ſuch would remember now that commination, *becauſe ye have ſet at naught my counſel, and would none of my reproof. I alſo will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. Then ſhall they call upon me; but I will not anſwer* [y]. How terrible, and yet how juſt!

The ſhock however has awakened us to ſome attention. This *then* is a time to aſk, whether you do not ſee the propriety of our exhortations to repentance? Will any, after this, go on to forget God; to ſlight his ſalvation, and riot in the characters of damnation? See what an awful God you have to do with. When he is pleaſed to clothe himſelf with majeſty, and to put on his terrors, the ſtiffeſt neck muſt bow, and the ſtouteſt heart muſt yield. The great mountains tremble at his preſence, and thy heart, *O ſinner*, more rocky than thoſe, muſt quake and faint at his indignation. You triffle with his mercy; but be aſſured, there is no trifling with his judgments.

Since the laſt ſhock, I believe, you have had your reaſonings and reflections upon the event, and, I hope, your reſolutions of leaving your ſins, and every impropriety of conduct. But

[y] Prov. i. 24——31.

when is it to begin? It is no diſgrace at any time to reverence God and his power. It is no ſhame to begin to be wiſe. *The fear of God is the beginning of wiſdom* [z], *and the love of God is the perfection of it* [a]. And is it a ſhame to keep in your ſenſes, whilſt ſo many are acting the part of fools and mad-men? Religion and virtue have your approbation and good word; but is that all? You have the moſt excellent religion, and you rejoice in your acquaintain with it. Strange that you ſhould be no better for a religion, you know ſo well, and value ſo much!

If you have had your reſolutions, it is not, I preſume, improper, to aſk, what you have done of that which you thought neceſſary? God has appeared to you twice. Have you abated any thing of the delicacies of life; or retrieved any thing of the antient frugality and diſcipline? Have you ſpent more evenings at home *in bleſſing your houſholds* [b], cultivating the younger branches, and worſhiping God with them? Hath the Lord's-day been more welcome to you for worſhip, than amuſement or dreſs? Have you made good any of the vows of your diſtreſs, and fear? If not, begin. Let not the heart cool before God is honoured by a ſpeedy and effectual return to him.

We are obliged in point of INTEREST; *to return to him that ſmiteth us* [c]. He frowns that we might recollect ourſelves; but then none will

[z] Job xxviii. 28. [a] 1 John iv. 7, 8. [b] 2 Sam. vi. 20. [c] Iſa. ix, 13.

will be gainers by it, beſides ourſelves. *He that is wiſe is wiſe for himſelf* [d]. Should we take another courſe, God will not loſe his glory. If we remain incorrigible, and will not glorify his ſaving mercy, he will glorify his juſtice in our deſtruction.

We are obliged in point of GRATITUDE. How eaſy was it for God to have exerted a little more power, and have rendered the laſt ſhock terrible in its conſequences? Inſtead of making our foundations tremble, he might have undermined them, and what a ſurprize muſt this have been to the ſecure. We have a lively image of this in the deluge of the world; and in the deſtruction of Sodom, *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage: they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded, and knew not till the flood came upon the one, and a ſhower of fire upon the other, and deſtroyed them all* [e]. How would all the various ſcenes of buſineſs and pleaſure have been haſtily ſhuffled together? The ſwearer's mouth might have been ſtoped with duſt, and he himſelf have felt that damnation which his tongue laſt pronounced. The adulterous bed might have ſunk ſo many fathoms under water, and that have quite extinguiſhed the impure flame. All the delicate and painted ſcenes of pleaſure in a moment might have been covered with thick ſmoke and darkneſs. But if inſtead of this, God has been ſo merciful, as to ſet bounds to his power; if he frowned, rather than ſtrike the deciſive blow, what

[d] Prov. ix. 12. [e] Luke xvii. 26—29.

what do we owe for this? How natural is it to run into the arms of that mercy, that hath ſaved us? Ingratitude is a new aggravation of ſin, as it is a freſh indignity offered to the Eternal God.

We are obliged, *finally*, in point of SAFETY. If lighter judgments have no proper effect, heavier are yet behind. God has many deſtructive arrows in his quiver, *and they are all ordained againſt his enemies* [f]. If thoſe warning pieces produce no good effect, he hath exterminating judgments in reſerve, to lay waſte, and to cut off from the face of the earth. God's dealing with the *Jews*, *Aſſyrians*, *Babylonians*, *Grecians*, and *Romans*, are a full proof of this truth. If we harden ourſelves, he can humble us, and break that ſtubborn confidence, which will not yield; and change the harp and the viol into notes of the moſt diſmal ſound. But what perverſe creatures thoſe, that nothing but the laſt extremity will convince, nothing make impreſſion, but deſolating thunders, earthquakes, and hell-fire.

Upon the whole, you ſee your danger and the means of your ſafety: *repent*, *reform*. Then will God be merciful and give you no more alarms. To expect this is agreeable to his word, which is faithful; agreeable to his former dealings with the *Jews*, *which are recorded for our admonition* [g]; agreeable to his own merciful nature, which is ever prone to help the diſtreſſed.

Judg-

[f] Pſal. vii. 13. [g] 1 Cor. x. 11.

Judgment is God's ſtrange work [h]; foreign to his nature, unuſual in his providence. He loves to have it prevented, and goes about it with reluctancy. *How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim?—mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together* [i]. "How ſhall "I give thee up, *LONDON*; my favourite "city, and the place of my reſt? In thee I "have been honoured; my covenant has been "owned; my name and ſanctuary, and ſab-"baths reverenced. In thee, many of my "faithful ſervants have witneſſed to my truth "and honour. They have, for my ſake, haz-"zarded their temporal intereſts and comforts, "and counted not their lives dear. How ſhall "I give thee up, for whoſe proſperity and peace "they offered their daily fervent prayers?" I would hope that we have an intereſt in this God, as our father's God.

Shall we fly from him? How vain! We can can no more fly from his power, than his preſence [k]. How fooliſh and abſurd would it be, to fly from a refuge, a defence. No—— rather let us fly to him. Let us come to him with lamentation and weeping for our ſins. *Let us humble ourſelves under this mighty hand of God, and he will exalt us in due time* [l].

Say---that a deluge is coming on. There's the ark of God, get into it and be ſaved. Say ---that the morning lowers, the clouds look black with vengeance, ready to break down on a guilty *Sodom*. Yonder ſtands *Zoar*, fly to it and

[h] Iſ. xxviii. 21. [i] Hoſ. xi. 8. [k] Pſal. cxxxix. 7. [l] 1 Pet. v. 6.

and be ſaved. There is the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who came to ſeek and ſave thoſe, that are loſt. There is authority in his name, and compaſſion in his nature. Make him your friend, and nothing ſhall truly hurt you. Let us hearken to his weighty inſtruction, *to fear God*, and then we have nothing elſe to fear [m]. When through him our peace is made in heaven, there is nothing on earth, that ſhould much diſturb us; and let me ſay, till this is done, there is nothing on earth that can make us eaſy. See how the mercy of God ſhines forth in the face of *Jeſus Chriſt*. What treaſures of wiſdom, what riches of grace, what life and ſalvation in him! *Come all ye, that are weary* of your ſins and willing to part with them: come ye, that are *heavy laden* with ſorrow and fear, *and he will give you reſt* [n]. He will bring you to a city, furniſhed with the nobleſt ſcenes of pleaſure; built upon foundations that are immoveable, every way worthy its divine architect, *whoſe builder and maker is God* [o].

Ah! how are we alarmed with a partial trembling of the earth? How are we dejected under the apprehenſions of a more dreadful ſhock, of which we know nothing. But I can tell you of a more tremendous earthquake; of a more awful vengeance, that will come in the end of the world. Get an intereſt in the ſon of God, and you will be ſafe, when all nature is in confuſion and diſſolving. *When the heavens ſhall roll away in thunder, the elements melt with fervent*

[m] Mat. x. 28. [n] Mat. xi. 28. [o] Heb. xi. 10.

vent heat, and drop in a ſhower of fire; when, not ſo much a ſingle houſe, or a great city, *but the whole world ſhall burn* [p]: then Chriſt your friend will give you a ſtation both of honour and ſafety, at his right-hand. It is the finiſhing glory of his mediatorial character *to deliver from the wrath to come* [q]. Which God grant we may all experience, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*

[p] 2 Pet. iii. 10. [q] 1 Theſſ. i. 10.

The END.

*The Hymn, * ſung after the Sermon.*

I.

O H! the immenſe, th' amazing height,
The boundleſs grandeur of our God!
Who treads the world beneath his feet,
And rules the nations with his nod.

II.

He ſpeaks; and lo, all nature ſhakes,
Heav'ns everlaſting pillars bow;
He rends the clouds with hideous cracks,
And earth's deep caverns roar below.

III.

Let noiſe and flame confound the ſkies;
Let earth affright'ned ſhake her frame.
We ſing the Thund'rers lofty praiſe,
Adore his pow'r, and love his name.

IV.

Thus ſhall the Lord the Saviour come,
And light'nings round his chariot blaze.
Earthquakes ſhall break up ev'ry tomb,
And thunders accent all his praiſe.

10 IA 66

* *This hymn is taken moſtly from the late worthy and excellent Dr.* Watts's *Hor. Lyr. B.* I.